Ethno graphy

Negotiating diasporic leisure among Zimbabwean migrants in Britain

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Abstract

This article examines, from a theoretical and empirical perspective, the types of diasporic leisure experienced by the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain through extensive fieldwork, including interviews and participant observation. It extends an emerging body of scholarship concerning the relationship between diaspora and leisure by discussing different conceptualisations of diasporic leisure as homeland-oriented, boundary-crossing, and technologically mediated. Specifically, this is done to highlight the role leisure practices play in the formation of diasporic consciousness and in negotiating and contesting transnational identities. The article develops a dialectic of diasporic leisure as a framework for understanding how leisure practices and activities reconnect the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain, enabling them to construct transnational identities in a country that construes them as "other." The paper's central argument is that diasporic consciousness and identities are activated, materialised and mobilised in and through leisure practices.

Introduction

This paper brings together ideas about diaspora and leisure and empirically demonstrates how diasporic consciousness and identities are activated and mobilised in and through leisure practices. Despite increasing attention to debates about diaspora space, hybridity

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and diasporic consciousness (Anthias, 1998; Brah, 1996; Kalra et al., 2005), the extent to which these processes are activated, mobilised and materialised in diasporas' everyday practices is often assumed. As Knott (2010: 83) points out, "a key challenge for diaspora studies is to engage with the realities of settlement, the political contingencies and relationships of diaspora space, as well as the narratives of travel and circulation, and the location of diasporic subjectivity."

It is difficult to know how to theorise the connection between diaspora and leisure. Part of the problem is that the notion of diaspora "struggled to establish a substantial foothold within leisure studies" (Burdsey 2017: 767). Equally, "leisure" does not feature significantly in Diaspora journals such as *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies.* Reviewing the relationship between the two concepts, Burdsey (2017: 767) argues that "the tentative academic relationship between leisure and diaspora needs to be placed in the broader context of scholarship addressing leisure and processes of transnational human movement in all forms." Over the past two decades, diasporas have been conceptualised as homogenous entities whose attachment to their place of origin is taken for granted to facilitate the transnational and instrumentalised flow of economic and social remittances (De Haas, 2005; Faist, 2008; Page and Mercer, 2018). The emergence of diasporas as development agents, a significant component of the development strategies pushed by NGOs, the World Bank, the IMF and sending governments to secure investment and remittances for Global South countries, fit well with neoliberal policies where the responsibility for development is individualised and depoliticised (Page and Mercer, 2018; Turner and Kleist, 2013). As Page and Mercer (2018: 320) explain, "in this policy-framing, diasporas are a source of remittances to be leveraged, investment to be procured, and human capital to be returned." Similarly, Tölölyan (2018: 28) described this as the "problematic politicisation of diasporas" and cautioned that "diaspora studies is in danger of becoming a servant to global political forces, as anthropology was once in danger of serving imperialism." As a result, unless diaspora leisure is oriented towards the homeland's productive sectors, it is considered irrelevant and unproductive.

This paper draws on the ethnographic material of Zimbabwean migrants in Coventry and Birmingham, United Kingdom, to illustrate how diasporic communities produce and consume leisure practices locally while remaining nested within global and transnational relations and processes. This paper is structured as follows. The following section provides a substantive discussion of the relationship between diaspora and leisure and develops a diasporic leisure framework as homeland-oriented, boundary-crossing and technologically mediated. The analysis then focuses on the consumption and production of diasporic leisure among the Zimbabwean diaspora in Coventry and Birmingham to highlight the role of leisure practices in diaspora formation. A final discussion argues the importance of bringing together diaspora and leisure to understand how the diasporic consciousness and identities are activated and materialised physically and socially.

Methodologically, the paper is based on more than 10 years of direct participation and interviews[1] with Zimbabwean migrants in Britain. It stems from a broader study that sought to explore the making of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Coventry, Birmingham, London and Wigan, how it is experienced, reproduced, contested and performed in particular settings, as well as how it maintains transnational connections with the

homeland (see Pasura, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2014). This paper draws specifically on eth-nographic material gathered from KwaGogo, a Zimbabwean pub in Coventry, and a *gochi-gochi*[2] (barbecue) in Birmingham, popular spaces for leisure and socialising among migrants. For fieldwork, the author made 20 separate visits to the pub and 12 to *gochi-gochi*. The paper also echoes the author's reflection, who has participated in these leisure spaces informally for several years since 2004. The author is a black male Zimbabwean from the Shona ethnic group and competent in the Ndebele language. The author was part of the leisure spaces and communities he studied. Hence, a male Zimbabwean diasporan and scholar writes the paper, whose motivation for embarking on the study was not mere academic interest but emanated from his experience of living in two social worlds. This is analogous to what Mills (1959: 15) called the sociological imagination: "a quality of mind that seems most dramatically to promise an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities."

It may be argued that my gendered positionality within these diasporic spaces enabled, and to some extent hindered, engagement with specific perspectives on leisure and di-aspora. The interviews were conducted with migrants, both men and women, community leaders and pastors. The author's biography and lived experience, which were used reflexively, were central to the ethnographic research process, such as gaining access to the diaspora leisure spaces and, for instance, interviewing undocumented migrants. At the same time, his position as a black African allowed respondents to share vulnerability experiences that they may not have shared with a white researcher, a sentiment that was echoed by some of the participants. For example, concern about immigration status among Zimbabweans in Britain meant that I avoided any related questions. The author's class position as a university researcher initially created a sense of distance and unease for some undocumented migrants, who were suspicious of anything that was "official." Consequently, sharing diasporic experiences was often a basis for building trust. Several respondents asked how my research could assist them in seeking political asylum in Britain or how it could contribute to political change in Zimbabwe.

Theoretical perspectives on diaspora and leisure

The relationship between diaspora and leisure can be understood by examining how these terms have been employed within academic usage. Diaspora and transnationalism have become the two master concepts for understanding contemporary migration, described by Faist (2010: 9) as "two awkward dance partners." Whereas transnationalism is about the everyday flows, networks and exchanges of people, goods and objects across national borders, and to a lesser extent, the flows of ideas and practices, diasporas, which are a prime example of transnationality, entail a strong sense of collective cultural identity, meaning-making and place-making in the places of settlement (Pasura, 2022). There are tensions between diaspora as an entity and diaspora as claims, projects and stances (Alexander, 2017; Brubaker, 2005). As an entity, the diaspora concept has been used as a typological tool to categorise social formations, wherein the archetypal model was one of forcible expulsion or scattering and usually associated with trauma in the Jewish model (Cohen, 2008). Most early discussions of diaspora associate it with loss or exile from the

homeland; hence, some suffering and the Jewish experience are seen as the concept's prototype diasporic experience (Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991). Consequently, diaspora came to be understood as referring to groups who were forcibly expelled from their homelands and remained socially marginal in hostlands as they waited to return. The initial formulation of the term diaspora emphasised socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of the diasporas, neglecting leisure practices in places of settlement.

From the 1960's and because of the secularisation thesis, the term diaspora was extended to non-religious groups who were forcibly expelled from their homelands, e.g. the African, Irish, Armenian and Palestinian diasporas (Cohen, 2008). It can be argued that the association of the term diaspora with the experience of trauma, loss or expulsion of a population from the homeland contributed to the scholarly neglect of leisure practices in places of settlement. Thus, diaspora scholars emphasise maintaining a collective identity through language, religions and cultural symbols instead of focusing on leisure practices.

Recently, there has been a shift in the conceptualisation of diaspora away from defining diasporas as substantive entities toward understanding diasporas as a process, stances or modes of practice, emphasising the social construction of diasporas (Alexander, 2017; Brubaker, 2005). Brubaker (2005: 13) argues that "rather than speak of 'a diaspora' or 'the diaspora' as an entity, a bounded group, an ethnodemographic or ethnocultural fact, it may be more fruitful, and certainly more precise, to speak of diasporic stances, projects, claims, idioms, practices, and so on." As Sokefeld (2006) notes, migrant groups need opportunity structures, e.g. enhanced means of communication and a permissive legal and political environment; mobilising practices, e.g. associations, demonstrations, and frames ideas like 'roots' and 'home' if they are to construct themselves as diasporas.

Rather than theorising diaspora as a descriptive typological tool (Cohen, 2008), Brah (1996: 16) regards diaspora as "an interpretive frame for analysing the economic, political and cultural modalities of historically specific forms of migrancy." So, "diaspora is a condition rather than being descriptive of a group" (Anthias, 1998: 565), and that condition is characterised by multiple orientations and identifications, simultaneous embeddedness in the place where diasporas live and the place which they do not reside, the country of origin. Brah (1996: 181) define diaspora space as "the entanglement of genealogies of dispersion with those of staying put." It is a contact zone, a space of interaction where the new diasporas and the ethnic minorities or residents must learn to dwell and live together. Knott and McLoughlin (2010: 271), informed by Brah's (1996) notion of diaspora space, persuasively argue for "leaving 'diaspora' for 'diaspora space', which means occupying an arena in which locations and their complex populations are taken seriously." A diaspora space disrupts and transgresses the boundaries of ethnicity and nationalism; hence, diasporic identities are negotiated rather than assumed as given (Brah, 1996). Diaspora space provides a useful analytical lens to analyse migrant and non-migrant experiences of boundary-crossing leisure (discussed below) and their shifting diasporic identities.

Diasporas challenge or disrupt the ideal of a homogeneous nation or essentialised identity and the new post-war diasporas were seen as potentially cosmopolitan social formations (Werbner, 2018). As Werbner (2018: 138) succinctly puts it, "diasporas, it

seems, are both ethnic-parochial and cosmopolitan. The task remains, however, to disclose how the tension between these two tendencies is played out in actual situations." If diasporas are potentially cosmopolitan and "subversive and transgressive" (Anthias, 1998: 566), the gendering of the diaspora provides one of the sites of struggle within the transnational context in which patriarchal gendered ideologies and gender relations are contested and renegotiated (Pasura, 2008, 2014). However, many classical diaspora scholars have approached diasporas in unmarked ways, normalising the male migration experience. Recently, scholars have approached the intersections of diaspora and gender by addressing conceptualisations of difference, how gender and other social divisions such as class, ethnicity and sexuality are essential in the negotiation of collective identities, diasporic imaginations of home and nation (Al-Ali, 2010; Anthias, 1998; Pasura 2008). Gendering the diaspora pays attention to the processes in which gender hierarchies are established (re)produced and contested within the transnational context (Anthias, 1998; Al-Ali, 2010; Pasura and Christou, 2018).

Leisure can be defined as "that thing and that space associated with the time when we are not working or engaged in domestic chores" (Spracklen et al., 2017: 10). It is primarily a concept of time and about concrete activities that involve space use (Martin, 2002). Leisure involves the interaction of people with places and in places. Zeleza (2003) identifies the four variables of participation, place, provision and politics to understand the production and consumption of leisure. Participation refers to the patterns of involvement by participants in leisure activities; places are spaces and locations where leisure activities are produced and consumed; provision signifies who provides for the leisure activities and politics indicates the conditions and contextual framework within which leisure is produced and consumed.

Recently, scholars have studied how migrants, ethnic minorities and diasporas' expressive cultural forms, such as music, films, football and cricket provide essential sites in which identity and belonging are imagined and materialised (Fletcher and Spracklen, 2014; Joseph, 2012; Kalra et al., 2005; Spaaij and Broerse, 2019). For example, recent research on the British South Asian diaspora illustrates how they use cricket as a powerful conduit to bridge between old and new homes and a mechanism to articulate British Asian identities (Fletcher and Spracklen, 2014). However, much of this scholarship is framed through debates about 'race relations', multiculturalism, integration and nation-state formation and neglects how migrants and diasporas maintain broader transnational relations (Levitt and Schiller, 2004) but also assume the stability of national and ethnic categories when examining migration and settlement processes. As Anthias (1998) persuasively argues, the concept of diaspora provides an alternative way of thinking about transnational migration and ethnic relations to those that rely on 'race' and 'ethnicity' because diaspora "pays attention to the dynamic nature of ethnic bonds and to the possibilities of selective and contextual cultural translation and negotiation" (Anthias, 1998: 577). The diaspora concept also pays attention to the simultaneity of the transnational identities and practices in multiple localities and across nation-state boundaries, thus, de-centring analytical perspectives which privilege the receiving country.

Carrington (2015: 391) provides some helpful observations assessing the concept of diaspora in understanding the intersection of race and sport:

The concept of 'diaspora,' surprisingly ignored in the study of sport, will be increasingly important in the future as it will enable critical race scholars to problematise the often Eurocentric and teleological underpinning of globalisation theory in relation to sport; considerations of diaspora will fuel more meaningful accounts of how sport reconnects geographically dispersed groups and changes identities and subjectivities in hostile circumstances.

Diasporas have always produced and consumed leisure as entertainment and sociability; thus, leisure practices are integral in maintaining collective identity and solidarity among members. Writing about the making of alternative diasporic public spheres in Britain by South Asian settlers, Werbner (2004: 897) made the following intriguing observation:

Less exposed to the wider public gaze of ordinary Britons, is a thriving transnational popular commercial cultural sphere imported from South Asia in which Muslim, Hindu and Sikh artists, actors, musicians and producers are all equally prominent: Bombay movies, cassette pop music, Pakistani dramas beamed on satellite T.V., Sufi devotional *qawwali* music, classical Indian music and dance, spices, jewellery, traditional clothing.

Hence, diaspora leisure entails making and playing music, watching movies, dressing, eating and drinking. For diaspora members, social relations are transnational; they stretch beyond a singular place and nation-state.

Within the broader field of migration studies, "leisure does not feature strongly […] nor do leisure scholars pay a lot of attention to migrants" (Mata-Codesal et al., 2015: 1). Migration scholars have explored the relationship between music and migration (Baily and Collyer, 2006) and how it facilitates the negotiation of belonging and integration among asylum seekers and refugees (De Martini Ugolotti, 2020; Lewis, 2010). For instance, Lewis (2010) explores the intersection of integration and transnationalism among recently arrived refugees in the UK and argues that music events and parties create 'community moments' through a sense of unity around central, familiar cultural symbols. Similarly, De Martini Ugolotti (2020) discusses the role of music in the negotiation of belonging, uncertainty and marginality among forced migrants in Bristol. However, the migration literature has often framed these debates using the nation-state as a frame of reference and within the policy discourses of the 'hostile environment', integration and community cohesion, and without foregrounding diaspora as a theoretical concept but as a descriptive term (Burdsey, 2017; Thangaraj et al., 2014).

Types of diasporic leisure

Diasporic leisure signifies the regular and sustained leisure practices and identities that transcend the nation-state frameworks and how circulating leisure practices and activities are transformed, contested or dissolved in their encounter with people, ideas and practices in places of settlement. For analytical and comparative purposes, diasporic leisure can be delineated by identifying its most essential characteristics: homeland-oriented, boundary-

crossing, and technology-mediated leisure. First, homeland-oriented leisure appeals to a diaspora notion as bounded and an entity and to ideas of identity that privileges a place of origin. Scholars have critiqued diasporas' instrumentalisation by governments and the international development industry (Faist, 2008; Page and Mercer, 2018). Beyond the uses of diasporas in strategic ways, e.g. diaspora tourism and diaspora return, homeland-oriented leisure also entails the production and consumption of leisure practices, activities and identities in migrants' everyday lives in places of settlement. Second, boundary-crossing leisure practices are hybrid, in-between and dynamic, and a conceptualisation of diasporas underpins them as claims, stances and projects (Brubaker, 2005). In this perspective, 'home' is not just a place of origin but also a lived experience of locality (Brah, 1996). Also, boundaries can be thick or thin and should be considered in inter-sectional ways along the axes of gender, class, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality. Third, technology-mediated leisure refers to how diasporas' leisure practices and experiences are increasingly facilitated and influenced by technology. While diasporas' appropriation of technology-mediated leisure is diverse and often shaped by socio-economic and contextual factors, it expands the diasporas' spheres of engagement and sociability, connecting those who migrated with those who stayed behind. The classification of diasporic leisure as homeland-oriented, boundary-crossing and technology-mediated leisure is mainly a heuristic tool to study diaspora leisure and shed light on diasporic consciousness formation or, the opposite of this, diaspora identity erosion.

Negotiating diasporic leisure among Zimbabwean migrants in Britain

There is a large body of scholarship on the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain (McGregor and Primorac, 2010; Mano and Willems, 2008; Peel, 2010; Pasura, 2011, 2014; Pasura and Christou, 2018). However, within these studies, significant focus is privileged on how opportunity structures in the places of settlement shape the development of the diasporic identity and its social, religious and political transnational manifestations, neglecting socio-cultural and leisure practices. From the late 1990's, in large numbers, Zimbabweans migrated to Britain, responding to political and economic crises in the homeland and opportunities abroad. The diaspora scattered in multiple locations in Britain in places such as London, Luton, Slough, Leicester, Manchester, Wigan, Sheffield, Coventry and Birmingham. Diasporic leisure spaces emerged spontaneously as places for migrants to share socially, reflect on Britain's unreceptive conditions and maintain transnational social relations. Spaces for leisure such as the pub and *gochi-gochi* (discussed below), as well as diaspora congregations (Pasura, 2012) and diaspora associational life such as asylum and community support groups, women and youth and associations (McGregor, 2009) and online communities (Peel, 2010), were central among Zimbabwean migrants in Britain to generate and maintain the diasporic communities.

Homeland-oriented Leisure: Zimbabwean pub in Coventry (KwaGogo)

Werbner (2018) suggested that diasporas can be both ethnic-parochial and cosmopolitan. For many Zimbabwean migrants in Britain, migration and displacement have led to the re-appropriation and re-enactment of homeland-oriented leisure practices, deploying the homeland as the frame of reference in constructing diasporic identities (Kuhlmann, 2011; McGregor, 2010; Pasura, 2014). Several homeland-oriented diasporic leisure practices can be identified, such as attending famous homeland musicians' musical shows and festivals like Zimfest, participating in diaspora congregations' family days out, listening, and discussing diaspora media. I deploy the Zimbabwean pub in Coventry as the archetypal example of homeland-oriented leisure.

The pub and *gochi-gochi* are some of the important sites in developing diasporic consciousness among Zimbabwean migrants in Britain. Diasporic consciousness, as Zeleza (2009: 33) describes it, is typified by 'racial', 'national', and 'transnational' consciousness. As he explains, "it is a mode of naming, remembering, living and feeling of group identity moulded out of experiences, positionings, struggles of the past and the present, the unfolding and the unpredictable future which are shared across the boundaries of time and space." Leisure practices at the pub are about maintaining a collective memory and myth about the homeland. KwaGogo (grandmother's place) is a Zimbabwean pub in Coventry owned by a Swaziland-born British woman. Although the pub bears an English name, Zimbabwean migrants renamed it KwaGogo to capture the feeling of 'home' and a sense of belonging in a society that constructs them as 'other.' A senior pastor for the Forward in Faith Mission International, a Zimbabwe Pentecostal church known for its strong views against drinking alcohol, also patronised the pub. He explains:

> Sometimes I go to the pub, and I go there as a place for socialisation. I sit and listen to what people are saying. Besides, I am the centre of information for many people in Coventry. People come to me for advice; I am like a resource person for Zimbabweans. I receive many telephone calls. I go to church, which is predominantly Zimbabwean. We have a men's meeting where we meet and socialise.

KwaGogo and *gochi-gochi* emerged in the diasporic imagination as spaces not only for the production and consumption of leisure but, most importantly, as sites to forge diasporic identity and solidarity. When asked why migrants call it a Zimbabwean pub, the pub landlady explains: "I think Zimbabweans associate themselves with this pub because a black person runs it. They used to come to Leamington and support me even though it was far away. I am sure they are lots of pubs run by black people, but the Zimbabweans feel more at home in this pub." The pub had become a drinking place and a place to create a 'home' in the diaspora. Tando, one of the respondents, explains:

> You may find a Zimbabwean community, which isn't geographical but integrated in terms of social activities like Zimbabwean churches. We have AFM (Apostolic Faith Mission), full of Zimbabweans, Forward in Faith Ministries full of Zimbabweans and you find a pub where

they meet, in this case, KwaGogo. They hold birthday parties and baby showers, and in that way, many people tend to meet and have connections.

As the quotation shows, several home-oriented leisure spaces and migrant organisations were formed across Britain. At KwaGogo, migrants monopolised the pub as the Zimbabwean beer-drinking place to socialise by playing Zimbabwean and African songs, inscribing the pub as a space preserved for diaspora conviviality. There is a clear tendency to eschew western music in the diaspora; ironically, much loved by the middle class in the country of origin, with substantial African and Zimbabwean music consumption. Here, we see a nation dislocated, simultaneously and unconsciously embarking on a project of re-inventing home.

KwaGogo is where the homeland's cultural symbols are invoked, rearticulated and imbued with new meanings. The pub sells Zimbabwean beer, Zambezi, Castle Lager, Bohlingers and Lion, and local ones such as Carling and Fosters. For example, some of the products in the pub, cigarettes and packets of nuts, had the label, 'proudly Zimbabwean.' The diaspora's collective memory and consciousness in the pub are actively produced through African music's playing, dancing and singing.

Although the pub closed at 11 p.m., regular patrons could drink inside the pub with curtains closed until the early morning hours. The place temporarily shifted from being a pub to a *shebeen*.[3] Similarly, Chinouya and O'Keefe (2008) describe how in Luton, Zimbabweans have re-invented the concept of the shebeens, notably found in Zimbabwean townships, and these offer friendly drinking spaces in someone's home (the shebeen landlord or queen) with the added benefits of Zimbabwean foods, and 'shebeen talk.' Equally, Muzondidya (2010: 50) describes how "Zimbabweans living in those parts of South Africa with large 'home communities' have established shebeens and pubs serving drinking and music needs of Zimbabwean patrons as well as restaurants." Shebeens were a key site for alcohol consumption in Southern African cities and spaces to forge collective African resistance against colonial rule.

Migrants' leisure practices are shaped by and respond to constraints and opportunities in the places of settlement. The pub offered a space to openly share their migration experiences, settlement, and racism in their places of settlement with co-nationals. It was the combination of leisure as a site of sharing, reflexivity and resistance in the context of a hostile British state and neoliberal economy. For most of the patrons at the pub and *gochi-gochi*, the fear of the Home Office, detention and deportation were tangible. Phathisa describes his experience of living in Britain as an undocumented migrant:

> The biggest problem that I have encountered here is stress. Living in the UK demands much more out of you than living in Zimbabwe. I have stress because of my immigration status, lack of social life and the nature of work that I do every day. All these and others make life very hard.

Participation in leisure spaces such as the pub and *gochi-gochi* was vital to pass information rapidly about raids and employment sectors receiving government scrutiny. Bloch's (2014) qualitative study with refused asylum seekers from Zimbabwe and Kurds

from Turkey in the UK shows that in order to keep their irregular migrant status hidden, their main strategies were either non-disclosure or the avoidance of social interactions. This contrasts sharply with my findings of Zimbabwean migrants in Coventry and Birmingham, where even undocumented migrants would put stickers of the Zimbabwean flag on their cars. Campbell (2020) stresses black sports clubs' centrality among Afro-Caribbeans in Britain, describing them as one of few public spaces for black sociability relatively free from state surveillance and intervention; equally, these were spaces for cultural resistance and (re)constructing alternative and positive identities.

The pub is a gendered space, a distinctly male space. Male black adults, predominantly Ndebeles and Shonas frequent the pub. The pub owner invested much money to make the pub family-friendly and attract Zimbabwean women but has failed. She explains, "It is costing me hundreds of pounds to bring women into this pub; it is a men's pub. I have known some men for 3 years, but I haven't seen their wives. They go home and eat and come back alone. We do occasionally see women here." Most male respondents invoked their culture to explain why the pub had remained a distinctly male space. As a male-oriented leisure space, the pub encouraged a specific form of social interaction that privileged pre-migration gendered ideologies and norms, discouraging diaspora women from accessing and consuming the leisure space. Moral judgments shaped the understanding of leisure in colonial Africa, particularly social drinking (Akyeampong and Ambler, 2002; West, 1997). Within the diasporic context, we see the pub as a space to (re) produce and normalise patriarchal power relations, setting out cultural boundaries of respectability. The pub is inscribed with dominant cultural values, whose norms were shaped by colonial policies than by African traditions, which normalise the view of men. In Joseph's (2012: 147) ethnographic study of the alcohol-infused leisure practices of a group of older Afro-Caribbean men in Canada, the "findings reveal that drinking at the cricket ground is a means for Caribbean men to mask the effects of old age (limping, forgetfulness and declining physical strength), and thereby renew their investment in hegemonic masculinity. Drinking also enables them to temporarily escape their wives and domestic labour as well as circumvent childcare."

Boundary crossing leisure: Gochi-gochi in Birmingham

This section utilises Brah's (1996) notion of diaspora space to discuss the 'boundary-crossing' forms of leisure. Whereas homeland-oriented leisure practices privilege the maintenance of collective identity and solidarity, boundary-crossing leisure practices offer space to destabilise and disrupt fixity and boundedness. Boundaries are essential to diasporas; otherwise, migrants can merge into the host society through integration. Brubaker (2005) refers to a tension in the diaspora literature between boundary maintenance and boundary erosion. The Zimbabwean diasporic identity development has primarily utilised the homeland as a frame of reference. In this section, the paper uses interviews and ethnographic material from *gochi-gochi* to examine boundary-crossing leisure practices, which are hybrid, in-between and dynamic.

Gochi-gochi concretizes Brah's (1996) notion of diaspora space where the newly arrived Zimbabwean migrants encounter and get along with the established Afro-

Caribbeans. *Gochi-gochi*, located in Birmingham near Smitheck, is where Zimbabwean migrants gather and spend cash with family and friends roasting meat and drinking beer. People from both Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups, men and women, would come to *gochi-gochi* to socialise. The owner Ndunduzo uses the backyard of a Jamaican pub. He was a mechanical engineer in Zimbabwe but now runs the popular *gochi-gochi* as his source of income. Ndunduzo calls himself a marketing adviser for Zimbabwean musicians such as the late Oliver Mutukudzi, Thomas Mapfumo and Aleck Macheso because of his close networks with Zimbabweans in the diaspora. The main reason Zimbabweans across all ethnic and gender boundaries frequent the *gochi-gochi* and the pub (mainly men) is a desire for food, music, language and social interaction evocative of the homeland.

Ndunduzo started the idea of a *gochi-gochi* in a disused shop, operating it more like a *shebeen*.[3] For 2 years, he was roasting *bruvosi* (meat sausage) and cooking *sadza*[4] for people who were coming from work tired. Ndunduzo travels to Milton Keynes from his new site, just like many nostalgic Zimbabweans, to buy beef, *bruvosi* and other traditional products. In Milton Keynes, a butcher operated by a British Indian specialises in cheap African food products. Most Zimbabweans in the diaspora drive hundreds of miles to this butcher to buy Zimbabwean products.

There are no signs outside the Jamaican pub describing the Zimbabwean *gochi-gochi*, yet it is central to the pub's survival. Ndunduzo does not sell beer to his customers; he simply plays Zimbabwean music (*miseve*)[4] and cooks *sadza*[5] (hard porridge) and roast *bruvosi* (beef sausage) for sale. A plate of *sadza* and *bruvosi* cost £7. Ordinarily, several people would eat from the same plate and bowl standing. During winter, the turnout is low but Ndunduzo would not go home without over £120. Dancing to *miseve* and eating mazondo (cows' feet) was more than purchasing these products but signified the meaning migrants attached to their experiences. As Tinashe, one of the respondents, explains:

> Life in Birmingham is far better than what I experienced in Bournemouth. We have good African food and not English food we used to eat in Bournemouth. You couldn't find mealie-meal, *maguru* (offals) and *mazondo* (cows' feet) but here everything is around. So, you could see the difference. You know the social life we used to have in Zimbabwe, you can't find it there. In Birmingham, you can come to a *gochi-gochi* and you will find 20 Zimbabweans. Tomorrow, you call each other and see what each and everyone is doing.

Although *gochi-gochi* offered a space for migrants to reimagine the homeland powerfully and authentically, it also attracted patrons from diverse African backgrounds. As Ndunduzo explains:

> Everyone has that longing for the homeland. People would imagine themselves roasting meat kwaMereki, kwaMushandirapamwe, kuMabvuku.[6] This place acts as a memory for those places back home. Even South Africans, Tswanas, Tanzanians, and Congolese come here for *gochi-gochi.* Some white people are also coming to eat *sadza*.

People from diverse ethnic groups, marital statuses, gender identities and political affiliations gather to celebrate a 'home' away from home. At the *gochi-gochi*, Ndunduzo organises the celebration of Zimbabwe's Independence Day, but most people do not see the need to participate in such an event. He explains, "normally we hold Independence Day celebrations; however, some tend to personalise it saying we are from MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) and we aren't free." *Gochi-gochi* and the pub allow members to celebrate "the glory days in the homeland"; inescapably, members engage in political questions about the cause of their predicament in the destination country.

Gochi-gochi was a place of encounter between Afro-Caribbeans and mainly Zimbabwean migrants, which fostered multi-diasporic co-existence. There are few contemporary ties and connections between the new African diaspora members and the Afro-Caribbean. This is surprising given that the anti-colonial struggle and shared experiences of racial exploitation were the foundation upon which African nationalism and pan-African movements were formed. Diasporic figures such as W.E.B. Dubois, Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Marcus Garvey, and George Padmore influenced Pan-Africanism and provided African liberation war movements' ideology fight for independence (Ackah, 2016).

Gochi-gochi may be well known among Zimbabweans in Birmingham and across the West Midlands, but there is an underground quality that those outside the community may not be aware of. The Jamaican pub has a dual purpose: to introduce and conceal *gochi-gochi*. It introduces Zimbabweans to the black community and the wider public and shields it from the risk of possible immigration raids from the Home Office. Ndunduzo does not have to operate with a license as his activities are considered part of the Jamaican pub. Furthermore, he does not pay any rent to the Jamaican owner as his mainly Zimbabwean customers buy beer in the pub. The *gochi-gochi* became a vital space to meet not just Zimbabwean migrants but also Afro-Caribbeans, African migrants and non-migrants.

Acceptance and ambivalence characterised the encounter between the Zimbabwean migrants and Afro-Caribbeans at the *gochi-gochi*. Zimbabweans migrants held negative stereotypes of the Afro-Caribbean, particularly their alleged propensity to violence and criminality. Ndunduzo explains, "We left Royal Oak because there were a lot *maJama* (Jamaicans) and some shooting incidents had happened. The place is close to the place where those girls Letisha and Shakespeare were shot. We were there for 8 months. In Royal Oak *maJama* (Jamaicans) were downstairs and we were upstairs. The police came and sealed everything." The demarcation of space itself is indicative of the tension and suspicion between the two social groups. As Patterson and Kelley (2000: 19) correctly argue, "neither the fact of blackness nor the shared experiences under racism nor the historical process of their dispersal makes for community or even a common identity." Zeleza (2009) argues elsewhere that these stereotypes are rooted in sensational media representations of Africans and Afro-Caribbeans and selective experiences of each other. *Gochi-gochi* provided the space that fostered strategic solidarity between the two groups through shared racial experiences of oppression.

It is no coincidence that some black Zimbabweans preferred to be identified as Jamaicans or South Africans for some reasons, the fear of deportation and Zimbabwe's bad

reputation in the British media (Pasura, 2011). *Gochi-gochi* offered a space where the local, the rooted, the diaspora specific co-existed with the transnational and global. Spaces to forge new alliances and affiliations across ethnic, national and diasporic loyalties. A multiplicity of loyalties and affinities characterized the *gochi-gochi*.

One of the significant findings of boundary-crossing leisure is the feminisation of drinking at *gochi-gochis*, parties and music concerts which has become normalised in the diaspora. Unlike the pub, it could be argued that *gochi-gochi,* because of its openness and informality, eroded the boundary between home and the pub, thus attracting female patrons. Historically, alcohol consumption among African women has been relatively low, and lifetime abstinence rates remain high in many African countries, including Zimbabwe (Martinez et al., 2011). Jabulani, a male respondent, expressed his surprise about female binge drinking:

> People who had a nice wedding back home but here are separated because the wife wants to be the boss of the house. She will say no, no, this is English you have to stand at the cooker. And the other thing which is wrong is that maybe 75% of the people who came from Zimbabwe didn't drink beer and I am talking about women but now most of them are drinking beer and I don't know whether it's stress or what I don't know. These are the big problems.

Gochi-gochi offered a space where gendered identities and social relations are negotiated and contested within the transnational context. Most of the diaspora women have financial autonomy in terms of how they want to use their money. Women's possession and control of their income become agents for transforming gender relations and roles (Pasura, 2008). Most of the male patrons at the pub and some at *gochi-gochi* raised concerns about female drinking and this was expressed in moral judgements about respectability and ways of behaving. In colonial Zimbabwe, West (1997: 645) examines the campaign against "joint drinking" between women and men at the municipal beerhalls, and it was the "men of the African petty bourgeoisie (clerks, clerics, teachers, journalists and the like) (who) sought to control the sexuality of their wives by keeping them away from the beerhalls." Furthermore, "much of the blame for the alleged moral decline in urban African life was attributed to the beerhalls and the seductive women they were said to attract" (West, 1997: 651). Within the diasporic context, the feminisation of drinking illustrates how the homeland's cultural norms can be contested or dissolved as diasporas organised in places of settlement.

Boundary crossing leisure cohere with the broader theoretical position of social constructionists, queer feminists and early post-colonial theorists who challenge not only the hegemony of the nation-state but also 'naturalised' assumptions of racial, ethnic, gendered and sexualised social hierarchies (Anthias, 1998; Brah, 1996; Manalansan, 2006). Migration is conceptualised as disruptive and offers spaces to rethink taken-for-granted social categories.

Technology-mediated leisure

One of the Zimbabwean diaspora's core features is its utilisation of Internet-mediated communication to create virtual diasporic leisure, simultaneously cementing diasporic identity and consciousness. The internet has been credited with facilitating digital diasporas and their role in international affairs and networking societies (Brinkerhoff, 2009). The rise of information communication technology such as the internet, blogs and forums and the advent of social networks such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter blurs the divisions between work and leisure, homeland and diaspora, as these activities can be done simultaneously. For example, using Zimbabwean nurse Makosi Musambasi in the British Big Brother 6 series in 2005, Mano and Willems (2008) examined the interaction among diasporic Zimbabweans in Internet chatrooms which illustrates how different diasporic identities are articulated, imagined and contested. In another study, Peel (2010) analysed sub-national virtual diaspora groups formed in the UK by Zimbabwean migrants, www.Goffal.com, which serves the mixed-race 'Coloured' community, and www.Inkundla.net, which services Ndebele speakers. Although technology-mediated leisure spaces attracted distinctive communities which mobilised around ethnicity and the homeland as a frame of reference, digital leisure was also boundary-crossing. It united segments of diaspora members scattered in multiple locations to imagine themselves as part of the fractured transnational Zimbabwean diaspora (Pasura, 2014).

Technologies allow the left behind and those who migrated to exchange and participate in technology-mediated leisure practices (Kang, 2009). For the Zimbabwean diaspora, information communication technologies and social networks are harnessed to create transnational virtual spaces where identities are enacted, contested and reproduced. For instance, the Zvirikufaya (Kedha TV), https://www.facebook.com/kedhapower/, which means things are rocking, provided a platform for members of the diaspora to construct and narrate migration experiences as success stories in terms of what they eat, drive, wear and live (Suk, 2017). Not to be outdone, the left behind in the homeland countered these narratives using similar success and happiness tropes. The Zvirikufaya phenomenon is an example of the multi-dimensional cultural exchanges between the diaspora and those in the homeland. Recently, Zimbabwean online television, dramas and comics have been produced by Bustop TV https://bustop.tv/and Magamba TV http://magambanetwork.com/for the diaspora audience. These online outlets use comedy to critique Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis and the ruling elite. Similarly, transnational social movement groups have emerged, using hashtags such as #Thisflag, #ZanuPFMustGo and #Tajamuka/Sesijikisile to mobilise against the ruling Zanu-PF party, corruption, and human rights abuses in the country.

The boundaries between placed-based leisure spaces and technology-mediated leisure are blurred. Digital leisure activities did not replace place-based leisure activities but reinforced each other. For instance, gochi-gochi and KwaGogo, as Zimbabwean diasporic leisure places, were popularised using different communicative methods such as text messages, the internet and diaspora websites such as NewZimbabwe.com. Due to the complex entanglements of diaspora space and the othering in the place of settlement,

kwaGogo and *gochi-gochi* emerged in the diasporic imagination as 'the places to go' not only for leisure but also to construct collective identity and solidarity.

Discussion

Bringing together diaspora and leisure helps us understand how diasporic consciousness and identities are imagined and materialised physically and socially. While recent studies have explored the role of leisure practices and identities in the context of forced migrations, belonging and identity (Lewis, 2010), these studies rarely foreground diaspora as an analytical concept. As Thangaraj et al. (2014: 6, emphasis original) argue, the few existing studies which employ diaspora tend to treat it as merely "a descriptive, rather than analytical, term—literally a shorthand for *what* happens after migration, rather than *how* and *why* such processes occur." The paper has delineated the diasporic leisure framework of homeland-oriented, boundary-crossing and technology-mediated leisure, which can be appropriated in studying other diasporas. This framework would enable what Burdsey (2017: 778) calls "a more substantive utilization of diaspora in theorizations of leisure … rooted in appropriate intellectual trajectories, rather than simply being a matter of incorporating another neologism."

This paper has drawn on the ethnographic material of Zimbabwean migrants in Coventry and Birmingham to illustrate how diasporic communities produce and consume leisure practices locally while remaining nested within global and transnational relations and processes. In the places of settlement, diasporas do not make communities on their own; they encounter those who are already there and in that diaspora space (Brah, 1996), a space where boundary formation is marked by negotiating difference, hybridity, diversity and solidarity, diaspora communities may retreat and construct identities which privileges the "primordial bonds of 'homeland'" (Anthias, 1998: 557). However, it is also a space to disrupt and challenge bounded identities, which opens up cosmopolitan possibilities. While social constructionists challenged understandings of diasporas as entities scattered longing for the homeland, whether real or imaginary, "the growing consensus has been, by contrast, that such imagined attachments to a place of origin and/or collective historical trauma are still powerfully implicated in the late modern organisation of diasporas" (Werbner, 2018: 138). To hold on to both conceptualisations of diaspora as an entity and diaspora as a claim, project, or stance is essential to capture diasporas' complexity. Diasporic identities are not static but processual, relational and fluid, and diaspora members actively create their new 'in-between' social worlds. For Zimbabwean migrants, the pub and *gochi-gochi,* produced in and through migrant social interaction, provided opportunities to enact and express various forms of agency, creating alternative migrant leisure spaces to share and reflect on their diasporic condition and their transnational belonging. Homeland-oriented leisure epitomised by the pub shows how diasporic leisure spaces are produced, maintained and invested with symbolic meanings of attachment to migrants' homeland. The activities, identities and practices of diasporic leisure were influenced by migrants' imagined connection to their places of origin. While the pub promoted homeland-oriented leisure practices and induced a sense of belonging for male

migrants, it simultaneously normalised patriarchal power relations, discouraging female migrants.

As a result of boundary-crossing leisure practices, diaspora spaces emerge that refuse to be reduced or mapped to particular ethnic or national identities. *Gochi-gochi* was a space that fostered open interactions, forms of resistance and a momentary reawakening of Pan-African diasporic consciousness. Boundary crossing leisure provided a hybrid, in-between and dynamic space, as exemplified by *gochi-gochi* and the encounter between the Zimbabwean migrants and Afro-Caribbeans, which offered the possibility of collective solidarity. However, the encounter was characterised by acceptance and ambivalence. The feminisation of drinking illustrated the shrinking of the diaspora's traditional and patriarchal influences or national identity narratives. The Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain also utilised internet-mediated communication to create virtual diasporic leisure, simultaneously cementing diasporic identity and consciousness.

Conclusion

The article discussed the relationship between leisure and diaspora and theorised this relationship through the conceptualisation of diasporic leisure as homeland-oriented, boundary-crossing, and technologically mediated. Informed by extended fieldwork with members of the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain, the paper argues that diasporic consciousness and identities are activated, materialised and mobilised in and through leisure practices. Using the dialectic of diasporic leisure as an interpretive frame, I have taken some tentative steps in that direction showing how diasporic leisure practices and activities (re)connect the Zimbabwean diaspora in Britain, helping them construct transnational identities in a country that constructs them as 'other.' The paper has examined the connections between diaspora and leisure, highlighting the processes of adaptation and change, negotiation and resistance, and the changing practices, identities, and experiences of leisure that arise in the wake of migration and displacement.

The co-presence of migrants in both the sending and receiving contexts in the transnational social field (Levitt and Schiller, 2004) gives them the ability to participate in and contribute to diasporic leisure practices and activities, addressing local struggles of racism and exclusion without losing sight of their transnational entanglement. Though diasporic leisure activities and practices may be local, they were deeply embedded in transnational social networks and institutions. Diasporic leisure provided contact zones where the imagination of the diaspora and its struggle and resistance against the hostile receiving state were forged. Thus, diasporic leisure spaces served as sites of mobilisation and resistance against Britain's hostile conditions under which migrants were forced to sell their labour. Responding to the challenges of international migration and the politics of exclusion, Zimbabweans in Britain utilised the homeland as a frame of reference to form diasporic identities while simultaneously blending and forging trans-ethnic solidarity with Afro-Caribbeans in boundary-crossing leisure practices. These diasporic identity trajectories should not be seen as mutually exclusive but can overlap, and as Werbner (2018) suggested, diasporas can be both ethnic and/or national-parochial as well as cosmopolitan. It could be argued that the pub and the *gochi-gochi* were places

Zimbabwean migrants and other Africans reclaimed the city from the invisibility and marginalised imposed by the anti-migrant discourses perpetuated by the media and the hostile British state.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

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Notes

1. All names in this study have been changed to protect respondents' identities.
2. *Gochi-gochi* is Shona word for barbecue or braai.
3. For Ndebele people, a shebeen is an illegal drinking place predominantly operated by widowed women.
4. *Miseve* is a plural Shona word for arrows, yet in the diaspora, it is used to refer to the Sungura Zimbabwean music rhythm.
5. *Sadza* is a Shona word for hard porridge.
6. KwaMereki, KwaMushandirapamwe and KuMabvuku are popular and predominantly male spaces for barbecuing in Zimbabwe.

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